UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.96/825/Part I/16
16 August 1994

Original: ENGLISH

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME

Forty-fifth session

UNHCR ACTIVITIES FINANCED BY VOLUNTARY FUNDS: REPORT FOR 1993-1994 AND PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET FOR 1995

PART I. AFRICA

Section 16 - Sierra Leone

(submitted by the High Commissioner)

GE.94-03158

I.16 SIERRA LEONE

Country Overview

Characteristics of the refugee population and others of concern to UNHCR

1. At 31 December 1993, UNHCR was assisting some 7,000 refugees in Sierra Leone, most of whom were Liberians from the Krahn ethnic group, as well as some 20 urban refugees of various nationalities. An estimated 8,800 Liberian refugees, who live mainly in urban areas, do not receive assistance.

2. Approximately 77 per cent of the assisted caseload is composed of women and children under 18 years of age; adult males represent the remaining 23 per cent of the population. They are accommodated in the Waterloo Refugee Camp which is located some 120 kilometers from Freetown. The majority of the Liberian refugees originate from the western part of Liberia, where most were engaged in agriculture.

3. In 1993, approximately 40,000 Sierra Leoneans returned spontaneously from Liberia and Guinea while another 1,683 received UNHCR assistance to return from both countries. As their areas of habitual residence are insecure, the majority of the returnees were placed in camps for the internally displaced. They are assisted by UNHCR, the Government of Sierra Leone, other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) under the relief programme for internally displaced persons and returnees.

Major developments (1993 and first quarter 1994)

4. The overall UNHCR-assisted refugee population in Sierra Leone remained stable during the reporting period. UNHCR has extended its assistance to an estimated 25,000 returnees and internally displaced persons.

5. Since mid-January 1994, there has been intense military activity, especially in the Kenema district. This resulted in further displacement of nationals as well as returnees, and paralysed economic activities in south-eastern Sierra Leone. Relief was virtually cut off for five months, causing further hardship to the internally displaced and the returnees.

6. A joint inter-agency mission which took place in October 1993 recommended the enforcement of the Government's coordinating mechanism. To this effect, a consultant has been recruited through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to assist the National Rehabilitation Committee (NARECOM) in its coordination role.

Programme objectives and priorities

7. The current situation in Liberia is not conducive to the return of significant numbers of refugees. UNHCR will continue to monitor the security situation and the progress of democratization in Liberia and will review the possibility of conducting a large-scale repatriation. In view of limited

opportunities for local integration and the difficulty in moving outside Waterloo Camp, the care and maintenance programme should continue. At the same time, income-generating activities will be further developed, where possible, to enable the refugees to meet some of their basic needs. The standard of education at the primary and secondary school levels will also be improved. Urban refugees will continue to benefit from assistance in the form of various types of skills and technical training.

8. Assistance to returnees is aligned with that provided to internally displaced persons. To avoid providing assistance on a selective basis to one group of nationals, UNHCR contributes across the board to the joint efforts with the Government, other United Nations agencies and NGOs. The Government coordinating body, NARECOM, will be supported to enhance its operational capacity.

Arrangements for implementation/related inputs

9. At the Waterloo Refugee Camp, UNHCR's main implementing partners are the Christian Assistance to Underdeveloped Societies Everywhere (CAUSE) and the Christian Council of Sierra Leone (CCSL). CAUSE implements various activities in the sectors of health, primary education and income-generating activities. CCSL participates mainly in secondary education programmes for Liberians as well as in rehabilitation of the local schools near the Waterloo Camp where refugee students are admitted.

10. UNHCR inputs for assistance to returnees and displaced persons are administered by the Sierra Leonean Red Cross Society (SLRCS) in camps in the east and north-east of the country, and by the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in the south. The Government of Sierra Leone through NARECOM continues to coordinate the assistance activities of all agencies through regular meetings and missions to project sites.

11. UNICEF provides technical assistance in the sectors of water and sanitation under the care and maintenance projects. In the areas where displaced persons and returnees are reintegrated, the network developed by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is also used to extend UNHCR assistance to the affected population.

General Programmes

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

12. The overall refugee situation in Sierra Leone did not vary much from the previous year mainly because there was no improvement in the situation in Liberia.

13. A total of 646 Sierra Leoneans who had sought asylum in Liberia were assisted by UNHCR to return. Up to 40,000 others returned spontaneously from Liberia and Guinea. As their home areas were still insecure, they had to be accommodated in existing camps for the internally displaced. This situation made it impractical for the Office to provide assistance on a selective basis in the same camps. With an allocation of $ 500,000 from the General Allocation for Voluntary Repatriation, the Office provided across-the-board inputs for assistance to returnees and displaced persons in camps and,

wherever possible, in home areas of return within the general context of NGO and United Nations assistance to the same beneficiaries.

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

Care and maintenance

14. Care and maintenance assistance for the Liberian refugees will continue at the current level since neither a new influx nor large-scale repatriation is envisaged in 1994.

15. The ongoing skills training and income-generating activities in the Waterloo Camp for Liberians will be expanded to involve and benefit more refugees. Some groups of refugees have recently been able to lease farmland near the camp and are being assisted to engage in agriculture to supplement their diet as well as to grow cash crops. Agricultural tools and seeds have been distributed to members of the two cooperative farms organized by refugees with the cooperation of local farmers.

16. In view of the growing interest of the Refugee Women's Cooperative in expanding their food market activities, a project to construct a marketplace is being formulated. This will be done by means of community participation and with limited assistance from UNHCR.

Voluntary repatriation

17. A contingency repatriation plan has been drawn up, anticipating a large influx of returnees once the security situation improves. This is being discussed with the Government in order to prepare for such events in future. An initial allocation of $ 200,000 has been made available from the 1994 General Allocation for Voluntary Repatriation to provide assistance to Sierra Leonean returnees from Liberia. A separate allocation of $ 20,000 was also made to facilitate the repatriation of Liberian refugees in Sierra Leone.

(c) **1995 programme proposals**

Care and maintenance

18. The proposed allocation for 1995 is slightly less than the 1994 allocation as a result of timely completion of the 1993 construction activities and arrival of project related equipment in 1994. It is also expected that the ongoing income-generating activities will be self-funding. In the water sector, the costs of upgrading the existing system, which was established in 1991, are included in order to ensure an adequate water supply to the Waterloo Refugee Camp. Provision is made to continue assistance to the urban caseload in the areas of education, vocational training and counselling. A special training programme is being developed for a group of young single mothers in the Waterloo Camp. There are expected to be some 70 beneficiaries.

19. Provision is also being made for the placement of water storage tanks at strategic points in the camp to cut down the distances and frequency of women and children walking to collect water. The number of pit latrines is also being increased to reduce the number of users per unit.

20. It is unlikely that the small caseload of Liberian refugees in the Waterloo Camp will become self-reliant, or even able to meet their basic needs. While the Government has security concerns for refugees having to live outside the camp, they are able to pursue activities such as agriculture in areas adjacent to the camp. The refugees are encouraged to lease land and to engage in agricultural activities in groups for production of food and cash crops. Assistance will be provided through the supply of seeds, fertilizer and tools. As the majority of the caseload in the camp is of urban background, it is expected that up to 1,000 individuals will participate in these activities.

21. Educational assistance at the primary and secondary school levels in 1995 is proposed for some 1,800 beneficiaries. At the secondary school level, the current strategy of assisting schools that admit refugees without charging fees will be continued, as it is more cost effective than providing individual scholarships. If large-scale repatriation to Liberia takes place, it might be possible to scale down this assistance.

Voluntary repatriation

22. No detailed budgetary provision has been made for this programme, as the situation in Liberia remains too fluid. Any individual or group that volunteers for repatriation will be assisted by UNHCR. If required, an allocation will be made from the General Allocation for Voluntary Repatriation.

Special Programmes

Education Account

23. In the 1993/1994 academic year, 60 refugee students benefited from post-secondary vocational training, 31 of whom are women. The number of beneficiaries was increased due to the large influx of Liberian refugees in late 1992. The project provides scholarship assistance to the refugees to acquire vocational skills at post-secondary level in order to increase their chances of employment. However, some of the requirements, such as provision of uniforms for students, could not be met owing to the shortage of funds under the Education Account. No increase in the number of beneficiaries is foreseen for 1995.

Other Trust Funds

24. Under the project funded by the German Albert Einstein Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI), 166 refugee students are assisted in post-secondary education during the 1993/1994 academic year.

25. For the 1994/1995 academic year, the levels of assistance under the DAFI programme will be maintained with no increase in the number of beneficiaries.

Programme Delivery and Administrative Support Costs

(a) Variations in planned activities in 1993

26. The 1993 expenditure was higher than the revised 1993 allocation. This resulted primarily from higher than anticipated common staff costs and purchases of non-expendable property. These were only partially offset by savings under the general operating expenses due to the move in mid-1993 to less costly office premises. Air-conditioners as well as other essential office equipment were also acquired following the move to new premises. The security situation in Sierra Leone necessitated setting up a security plan for the United Nations agencies in Sierra Leone, the costs of which are shared by UNHCR.

(b) 1994 planned implementation

27. The revised 1994 estimate is slightly higher than the initial estimate. It includes salaries and common staff costs to cover costs of rotation and other staff benefits as well as costs related to the creation of a Protection Officer post from 1 July 1994 to strengthen the protection role of the Office and to assist in monitoring spontaneous returnees. In view of the Branch Office's increased monitoring role, particulary relating to assistance to spontaneous returnees, higher travel costs are also foreseen in the revised 1994 estimate.

(c) 1995 programme proposals

28. The slight increase in the initial 1995 estimate is due to a provision for the replacement of an old vehicle.

UNHCR EXPENDITURE IN SIERRA LEONE

(in thousands of United States dollars)

1993	1994		1995	
AMOUNT OBLIGATED	ALLOCATION APPROVED BY 1993 EXCOM	PROPOSED REVISED ALLOCATION	SOURCE OF FUNDS AND TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	PROPOSED ALLOCATION/ PROJECTION
GENERAL PROGRAMMES (1)				
970.9	814.6	378.3	CARE AND MAINTENANCE	279.3
500.0 a/	–	220.0 b/	VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION	–
–	–	462.2	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Annexes I a and II a	538.9
1,470.9	**814.6**	**1,060.5**	**SUB-TOTAL OPERATIONS**	**818.2**
–	–	35.2	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Annexes I b and II b	12.9
1,470.9	**814.6**	**1,095.7**	**TOTAL (1)**	**831.1**
SPECIAL PROGRAMMES (2)				
53.4	36.3	36.3	EDUCATION ACCOUNT 60 university scholarships	76.0
124.0			OTHER TRUST FUNDS	
	2,000.0	–	REPATRIATION/RETURNEE PROGRAMME	–
177.4	**2,036.3**	**36.3**	**TOTAL (2)**	**76.0**
1,648.3	**2,850.9**	**1,132.0**	**GRAND TOTAL (1+2)**	**907.1**

a/ obligation incurred against the General Allocation for Voluntary Repatriation
b/ allocated from the General Allocation for Voluntary Repatriation